

5 APR 1970

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27 April 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED] ONE/FE Staff [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: THE COMMUNIST INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDOCHINA:
INCREASING IMPORTANCE, DECREASING KNOWLEDGE

1. The intelligence community generally recognizes that the war in Indochina, particularly in South Vietnam, is shifting increasingly to the political plane. This would seem to make a solid understanding of the Communist infrastructure more imperative than ever. Ignorance in this regard could be disastrous for US policy in the area.

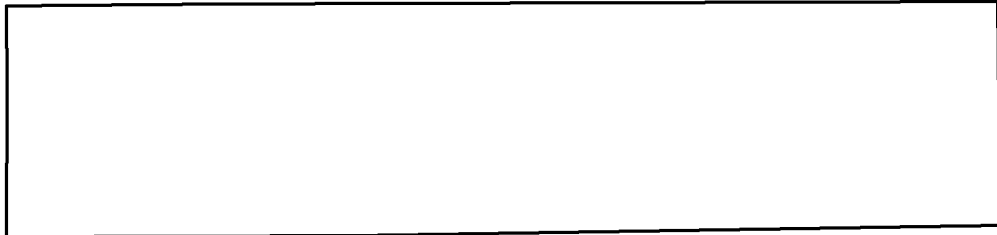
2. But the intelligence community generally -- and the Agency specifically -- is becoming increasingly ignorant concerning the Communist apparatus. Indeed, it can be argued that we have never really been on top of the problem. In any event, there is not now any systematic analysis of the Communist infrastructure in its totality. OER maintains a selective and ad hoc approach to the subject; OCI follows the problem in gross terms, but not with sustained or in-depth coverage; the DDP, notably the CI staff, has some selective expertise; and SAVA has a limited capability. This is about all there is. And it is not enough.

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4. Thus, there is an intelligence gap of important -- perhaps critical -- dimensions in the making. US policy in Vietnam will work only if the South Vietnamese can come with the Communist apparatus in the political as well as military spheres. We have only limited insight into this part of the Communist effort and to a dangerous extent we operate by our gut feelings which lead us to pessimistic conclusions. But we need to know, not just feel. And the information is available; it just requires a lot of detailed nuts and bolts research. The assets to do this exist within the Agency, particularly within OER, but they need to be concentrated and focused on the target. Another possibility would be the resurrection -- in abbreviated form --  to tackle the task.

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5. But however it might be done, the essential point is that it be done -- and soon. The Communists are giving increased attention to their infrastructure. It would seem to follow that we should do likewise. But the truth is that we are doing increasingly less.

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